

MAR - 9 2006



**FEMA**

The Honorable Tom Coburn, M.D.  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

Thank you for your letter of January 12, 2006, co-signed by Senator Barack Obama, to R. David Paulison, Acting Director of the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). You were concerned about the pace of transitioning Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees into longer-term housing solutions and the cost of providing interim housing.

I thank you for supporting FEMA's progress in transitioning families from the hotel/motel direct-bill assistance program into longer term housing. Our hotel and motel program has successfully provided evacuees with safe, comfortable and private temporary accommodations while awaiting an eligibility determination for FEMA's long-term housing assistance.

To better assist applicants, FEMA established an authorization code process for hotel/motel stays beyond February 7, 2006. An aggressive outreach campaign was launched to make evacuees aware of the authorization code process and timelines. Notification to evacuees included ad buys in regional and national newspapers, broadcast public service announcements, hotel outreach, and a series of six direct distribution flyers to evacuee rooms.

The authorization code process enables FEMA caseworkers to work more closely with families throughout the application process and allows families an opportunity to implement their long term housing plans. At the same time, the authorization process allows FEMA to ensure that taxpayer dollars are supporting hurricane evacuees and not those who might take advantage of a program for disaster victims. FEMA continues to work with individuals on a case-by-case basis to ensure their housing needs are met.

I trust this information is helpful to you. Should you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact our Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 646-4500.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Garratt", written over a horizontal line.

David Garratt  
Acting Director of Recovery  
Federal Emergency Management Agency